



PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 444-9947

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Western Montana Fish and Game Association, Inc., Deer Creek Shooting Center

2. Type of Proposed Action:

Members of the Western Montana Fish and Game Association propose to:

- Construct a new access/egress road.
- Install an access/egress gate for the new road.
- Raise safety berms on bay 300-B.
- Install shooting covers on bays 50-B and 50-C.
- Widen road at training bay.
- Improve archery bay.
- Replace bullet deflectors on rifle bays.
- Expand and improve shotgun bay.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Deer Creek Shooting Range is located just over one mile east of East Missoula, Montana, ¼ mile south of Interstate 90 at Shooting Center Lane, Missoula, MT 59802; Lat. 46.87254, Long. -113.91281; Section 19, Township 13 North, Range 18 West.



Figure 1 – Aerial View of Deer Creek Shooting Range, Missoula, Montana

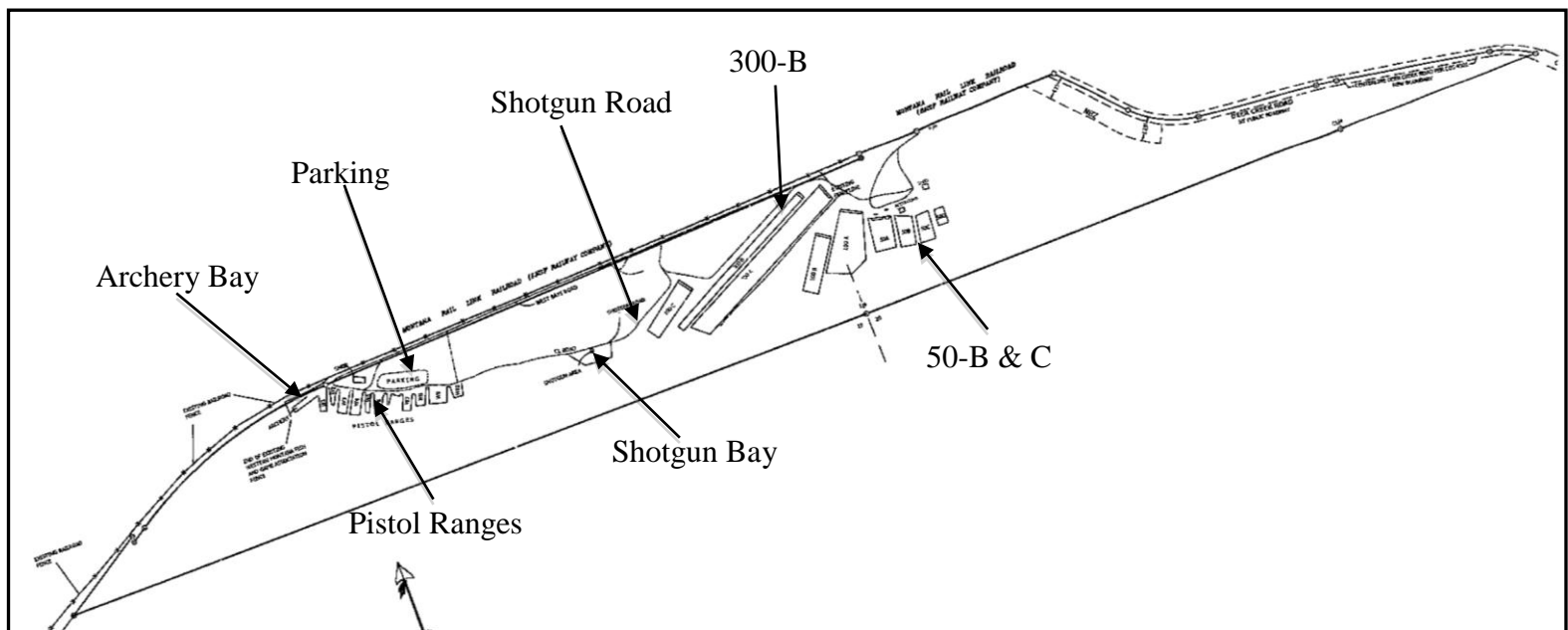


Figure 2 – Project Area at the Deer Creek Shooting Range, Missoula, Montana

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
- (ii) May not limit the number of members;*
- (iii) May charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
- (iv) Shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

5. Need for the Action(s):

In 2011, the Western Montana Fish and Game Association purchased approximately 30 acres between the Deer Creek Shooting Center and Deer Creek Road. The Western Montana Fish and Game Association made this purchase with the assistance of a Shooting Range Development Grant from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and funds borrowed from a local bank. The Western Montana Fish and Game Association has since paid off the mortgage with the local bank and now owns the property free and clear. The Western Montana Fish and Game Association is now applying for an additional grant to continue the Western Montana Fish and

Game Association's expansion onto this new property. The proposed projects will contribute to the long-term convenience and usefulness of the facility for the club members, the local community, and the general public.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

The 2015 goal for the Western Montana Fish and Game Association for the Deer Creek Shooting Range includes in not particular order of priority:

1. Construction of a new access/egress road.
2. Installation of an access/egress gate for the new road.
3. Raise safety berms on bay 300-B.
4. Installation of shooting covers on bays 50-B and 50-C.
5. Widen the road at the training bay.
6. Improve the archery bay.
7. Replacement of bullet deflectors on the rifle bays.
8. Expansion and improvement of the shotgun bay.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The proposed project would involve approximately ten acres of the 129-acre Deer Creek Shooting Center.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The Deer Creek Shooting Center is located on 129 acres of privately owned land deeded to the Western Montana Fish and Game Association. The property is not located within a floodplain and there are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. The range offers shooting opportunities for rifle, pistol, shotgun, archery, and black powder.

9. Description of Project:

The proposed project involves construction of a new access road with gate and various safety improvements at the Deer Creek Shooting Center.

1. New access road, 1,500' long X 20' wide asphalt with 3 culverts	\$ 74,940
2. New electronic/manual entrance/exit gate.	\$ 26,960
3. Berms 300-B	\$ 16,320
4. 2 shooting covers	\$ 24,300
5. Road at training bay	\$ 1,800
6. Archery bay berm	\$ 7,280
7. Bullet Deflectors	\$ 6,750
8. Shotgun Bay	\$ 14,800
9. Project supervision	\$ 630
10. Grant application preparation	<u>\$ 1,000</u>
▪ Total Project Budget	\$174,780
▪ Total Funding Requested from FWP	\$ 87,390

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

None

Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$87,390

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

The Deer Creek Shooting Center is a private range with an annual membership fee of \$50. The range is open to visitors at no charge during organized matches and public sight-in days. Members are welcome to bring guests at no charge. Several organizations use the range each year, including local law enforcement, Missoula County Sheriff's Department, Montana Highway Patrol, FWP Wardens, Boy Scouts, 4-H, and FWP Hunters Education. In addition, several events sponsored by the Western Montana Fish and Game Association are held at the range, as well as various shooting and gun safety classes.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

Because the Western Montana Fish and Game Association is a nonprofit private shooting club for members, there has been no public involvement in the planning process. Proposed range development proposals have been discussed with the club members and the associated project vendors and contractors.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Randy Semple, P.O. Box 4294, Missoula, MT 59806; (406) 370-0804.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

The Deer Creek Shooting Center is a private nonprofit shooting range. The closest shooting range providing similar shooting opportunities is located in Missoula, Montana 35 miles from the Deer Creek Shooting Center.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 29, 2015.

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A, the Proposed Alternative, and Alternative B, the No Action Alternative, were considered.

Alternative A (Proposed Alternative) is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project): to construct a new access road with gate and to implement various safety improvements throughout the range at the Deer Creek Shooting Center. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.

Alternative B (No Action Alternative) Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. The no action alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

None. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There was no other alternative that were deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations):

None

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmentally sensitive areas.

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		#4
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		#7
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		#8
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

2. & 5. There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may leave the immediate area during road re-surfacing activity.

4. The construction of a new access road with gate and various safety improvements throughout the range will not change the overall abundance and diversity of plant species within the area. The proposed project occupies a small portion of the property. Due to prior land use, native vegetation has been disturbed in the area of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project will have a minor impact on native vegetation in the area.

7. The proposed project will cause limited displacement of soils but the developments will not substantially effect geological features or establish new erosion patterns. Soil disruption for this site is localized. Erosion control measures will be in effect and disturbed area will be reseeded.

8. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during construction. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population near the property.

9. This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		

9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

5. The proposed projects would improve the safety for members and the public using the range.

7. The proposed developments will increase shooting opportunities within the community.

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range or altered areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative.

The Western Montana Fish and Game Association's Proposed Alternative, to construct a new access road with gate and various safety improvements, is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the Proposed Alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Paragraph 9.

PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? No

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

- Randy Semple, P.O. Box 4294, Missoula, MT 59806; (406) 370-0804.

- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

Andrea Darling, Darling Natural Resource Consulting, Montana City, MT 59634

Date Completed:

June 23, 2015

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Missoulian, Missoula, MT* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.